



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.7708 | FAX (517) 373.1450

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Contact: Scott Starr  
517-373-7708

## **Gilbert, O'Keefe testify in support of landfill legislation**

**LANSING** – Sen. Jud Gilbert and St. Clair County Environmental Services Director Larry O'Keefe testified before the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee Tuesday in support of legislation to authorize a first-of-its-kind bioreactor demonstration project at a local landfill.

Senate Bill 747, along with House Bills 5148 and 5149, would allow Smiths Creek Landfill to become the first in the nation to use waste from residential septic tanks to speed up a landfill's decomposition process.

"This method will extend the life of the landfill, decompose trash more efficiently and produce methane gas that can be sold," said Gilbert, R-Algonac.

Also testifying was Dr. Te-Yang Soong and Morgan Subbarayan of CTI and Associates, the firm contracted to build the bioreactor facility.

All three testified on the environmental and economic benefits this facility will offer St. Clair County and the state. If successful, the procedure could be used throughout the country.

Workers already are getting the landfill ready in anticipation of the Legislature's approval of the bills. According to research, a wet landfill decomposes better than a dry landfill. Currently, waste is dumped into a hole and covered with dirt, taking many years or even decades to decompose. The micro-organisms in the septic waste would increase the decomposition rate dramatically. To prevent the liquid septic waste from seeping into the ground, the landfill will be fitted with a special double lining.

In addition to speeding up the decomposition process, the procedure will allow septic waste to be used instead of being taken to a wastewater treatment facility. It is economically friendly and has the support of state environmental groups as well.

Committee approval of the legislation is expected next week.

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**Photos of Sen. Gilbert and his guests testifying before committee are available at**

**[www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/)**